



Honda, Rohrabacher Introduce Bill to Give WW II POWs Their Day in Court

Washington, DC-Today, American veterans who were forced to perform slave labor for Japanese companies while imprisoned in Japan during World War II got closer to an elusive goal- their day in court. At a press conference today in the United States Capitol, California Congressmen Mike Honda (D-San Jose) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-Huntington Beach) brought together a group of veterans, POWs, and Members of Congress from both parties in support of their "Justice For American World War II POWs" Act of 2001" that will be introduced today.

"I am proud to introduce, the Justice for United States Prisoners of War Act with my colleague from California, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher," said Honda. "It is my great hope that this historic legislation will restore some measure of dignity to our World War II POWs by setting the record straight and giving them their much deserved and long-awaited day in court."

The "Justice for United States Prisoners of War Act" would allow American military POWs to sue Japanese companies in U.S. state or federal court for losses and injuries sustained during the time they were imprisoned and forced into slave labor. The bill interprets section 14(b) of the Treaty of Peace with Japan as not constituting a waiver by the United States to allow lawsuits by its POWs against Japan and its corporations. The bill would also instruct the courts to apply the statute of limitations of the State where any suit is brought to preserve claims that are currently being brought by American POWs against Japanese corporations in state and federal courts. The bill also provides that if Japan enters into peace settlement terms with another country more beneficial to that country than to the United States, those additional benefits will also be extended to the United States.

"During World War II, when I was very young, my family and I were sent to an internment camp in Colorado. The Redress movement, which focused the United States on coming to terms with the injustices of the internment of its own citizens, shaped my desire to set the record straight for our POWs," continued Honda. "Many of the POWs I have met with over the years have told me they cannot forgive or forget what happened to them during the war. I am hopeful that this bill may enable some of them to complete the healing process."